

Message Text

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41

ACTION AID-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-11 ISO-00 SAM-01 FDRE-00

SP-02 L-03 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-07 AGR-05 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 DODE-00 /071 W

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R 231325Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7776

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 0997

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SP SS AG MR

SUBJECT: RELIEF ASSISTANCE TO WESTERN SAHARA

REF: STATE 041603

1. WE BELIEVE USG WILL NEED TO MONITOR CLOSELY ICRC ASSURANCE THAT ITS ASSISTANCE TO SAHARA REFUGEES WILL BE DISTRIBUTED ON EVENHANDED BASIS, I.E., AVOIDING TO EXTENT POSSIBLE NEGATIVE POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS FOR USG WITH MOROCCO, MAURITANIA AND ALGERIA. IN THIS CONNECTION WE NOTE "UNDERSTANDING" EXPRESSED REFTEL PARA 2 THAT "THOSE MOST IN NEED ARE WOMEN AND CHILDREN LIVING IN THE AREA OF THE SPANISH SAHARA NOW CONTROLLED BY THE ALGERIAN-SUPPORTED FRONT POLISARIO."

2. LATTER STATEMENT BOTHERS US IN TWO RESPECTS. FIRST, ITS ACCURACY QUESTIONABLE. ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION, MOROCCAN ARMED FORCES NOW CONTROL ALL MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS IN NORTHERN SAHARA. SECONDLY, US SUPPORTED ICRC DISTRIBUTION TO REFUGEES IN ANY REMAINING POLISARIO-CONTROLLED POCKETS IN
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NORTHERN SAHARA WILL INEVITABLY CAUSE GOM, AND PRESUMABLY ALSO GIRM, CONSIDERABLE UNHAPPINESS. FOR ONE THING, WHILE SUCH ICRC

DISTRIBUTIONS WOULD BE EARMARKED FOR REFUGEES, MOROCCANS CAN BE EXPECTED TO ARGUE THAT SUPPLIES OF THIS NATURE WOULD IN EFFECT SUPPORT GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES.

3. IT WOULD THEREFORE SEEM DESIRABLE FROM USG POINT OF VIEW THAT ICRC CAREFULLY AVOID DESIGNATING ASSISTANCE SPECIFICALLY FOR REFUGEES ALLEGEDLY UNDER POLISARIO CONTROL WITHIN THE SAHARA, LETTING RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR DETAILS. IT WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL POLITICALLY HERE IF OTHER GOVERNMENTAL DONORS ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO ICRC AND AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE CONVEYED TO ALGERIA NOT BE DISPROPORTIONATELY GREAT COMPARED TO ASSISTANCE TO OTHER SIDE.
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